

PRESS RELEASE
MULTI-NATIONAL SECURITY TRANSITION
COMMAND – IRAQ

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Iraqi soldiers make donation for Katrina victims

TAJI, Iraq – Iraqi soldiers serving at Taji military base collected 1,000,000 Iraqi dinars for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Iraqi Col. Abbas Fadhil, Iraqi base commander, presented the money to U.S. Col. Paul D. Linkenhoker, Taji Coalition base commander, at a Sept. 5 staff meeting.

“We are all brothers,” said Abbas. “When one suffers tragedy, we all suffer their pain.”

The amount of money is small in American dollars – roughly \$680 – but it represents a huge act of compassion from Iraqi soldiers to their American counterparts, said U.S. Army Maj. Michael Goyne.

“I was overwhelmed by the amount of their generosity,” Goyne said. “I was proud and happy to know Col. Abbas, his officers, NCOs and fellow soldiers. That amount represents a month’s salary for most of those soldiers.”

Abbas read a letter he wrote after giving the envelope to Linkenhoker

"I am Colonel Abbas Fadhil; Tadjji Military Base Commander," Abbas wrote. "On behalf of myself and all the People of Tadjji Military Base; I would like to console the American People and Government for getting this horrible disaster. So we would like to donate 1.000.000 Iraqi Dinars to help the government and the People also I would like to console all the ASTs who helped us rebuilding our country and our Army. We appreciate the American's help and support. Thank you."

In a reciprocal gesture, U.S. Soldiers attended a memorial service Sept. 5 for victims of the disastrous panic during a pilgrimage in Baghdad, which happened the same day Hurricane Katrina struck the U.S.

More than 1,000 people, mostly women and children, fell into the Tigris River or died on a bridge over the river when the crowd panicked after rumors that suicide bombers were in the procession.

Abbas spoke of the Iraqi victims as “martyrs” and donated one half of his paycheck to a fund earmarked for their families. A collection box for the fund was filled with contributions from American soldiers.

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